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St. Louis Convention Center

1 I am concerned about the danger inherent in transporting vast amounts of radioactive waste through 43 states over a period of 25 years through population centers such as St. Louis.

I am not satisfied that the NRC has conducted satisfactory tests to determine the safety of transporting the waste. Amy Shollenberger, senior policy analyst for Critical Mass, has charged that the NRC is relying on computer-simulated tests, rather than on tests of real transportation containers. She recommends that the NRC change its testing methods to ensure it gets an accurate idea of the dangers involved.

2 I have concerns about the design and fabrication of the containers. Between 1986 and 1990 we had several rail shipments of Three Mile Island fuel through St. Louis. Before those shipments began, the NRC found many defects in the containers by spot-checking - defects such as defective O-rings. Because it will be impossible to check each container, it seems likely that there will be defects in some of them.

What assurance do you have that no water will be present in the transport containers? I understand that for shipping the damaged Three Mile Island fuel the NRC required that each container contain something called a "recombiner catalyst". They knew there would be some residual water in the containers. The recombiner catalyst was to prevent a fire or hydrogen explosion from occurring as a result of the interaction of water with the radioactive fuel.

3 Furthermore, I am concerned that communities along the radioactive waste route are not prepared to respond to possible accidents, such as fire, collision, derailling, etc. Considering that the amount of radioactivity in the fuel rods to be shipped is the equivalent of 2.3 million atom bombs, even a small accident could create a disaster.

4 Finally, I question why utilities which profit from nuclear power should ask the citizens of this country to pay to clean up their mess, even as they continue to create more mess! Citizens should not have to pay millions of dollars in transportation costs and put their lives at risk in order to bail out a powerful industry, while it continues to pollute the environment. The nuclear industry should take care of its own wastes! Let the wastes stay at the sites where they are created and where they can be monitored by industry experts.